

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 13027 01 OF 04 040940Z
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 PARIS 13027

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TAGS: PFOR US VN
SUBJ: US/VN RELATIONS: REPORT ON MAY 3 SESSION

REF: (A) PARIS 12924, (B) PARIS 12886

1. FOLLOWING WELCOMING STATEMENTS BY PHAN HIEN AND
INTRODUCTIONS OF THE TWO STAFFS, ASSIST. SECRETARY
HOLBROOKE MADE HIS OPENING REMARKS. IN THEM HE STRESSED
PRESIDENT'S WISH TO LOOK AHEAD TOWARD NORMAL RELATIONS
WITH VIETNAM AND EXPRESSED OUR DETERMINATION TO
ESTABLISH A NEW AND MORE PRODUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. INDICATING WE HAD STUDIED
VERY CAREFULLY THE STATEMENTS GIVEN TO THE WOODCOCK
COMMISSION IN HANOI WHICH PROPOSED
ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, HOLBROOKE
INDICATED THAT THE US WELCOMED AND SHARED THESE VIEWS.
HE THEN PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS
AT THE AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL AND EARLY EXCHANGE OF
EMBASSIES IN EACH OTHERS CAPITALS. STRESSING THAT A
CONTINUED ACCOUNTING OF MIAS WILL REMAIN A MAJOR CONCERN
FOR US, HOLBROOKE CONVEYED OUR APPRECIATION FOR RECENT
SRV ACTIONS ON THIS ISSUE AND OUR EXPECTATION THAT
CONTINUED PROGRESS WOULD BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF NORMAL
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SECRET

PAGE 02 PARIS 13027 01 OF 04 040940Z

RELATIONS.

2. HIEN BEGAN HIS RESPONSE BY POSING THREE QUESTIONS:

-- WHETHER CARTER ADMINISTRATION REALLY DESIRES TO
SOLVE MATTERS LEFT BEHIND BY THE WAR, WHICH HE
DESCRIBED AS BEING OF "DECISIVE SIGNIFICANCE AND GREAT

IMPORTANCE."

-- WHAT IS RESPONSE OF THE US TO SRV STATEMENT IN HANOI OF THE THREE MAJOR PROBLEMS FACING OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS I.E. MIAS, US AID TO SRV, AND NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS. REGARDING US CONTRIBUTIONS TO HEALING WAR WOUNDS IN VIETNAM HIEN ASKED WHAT ITS CONTENT WOULD BE, WHAT ITS FORM WOULD BE AND HOW THE PROCESS OF PROVIDING IT WILL DEVELOP. HE RESTATED THAT THESE THREE PROBLEMS ARE INTERRELATED AND SAID THAT PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTING OR SOLVING THEM WILL TAKE PLACE IN PARALLEL.

-- THE THIRD QUESTION CENTERED ON DOCUMENTS PROVIDED WOODCOCK COMMISSION IN HANOI REGARDING ECONOMIC CONCERNS: THE LIST OF COMMODITIES NEEDED BY THE SRV IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE; DISCUSSIONS REGARDING LONG-TERM ECONOMIC RELATIONS INCLUDING AID AND LONG-TERM LOANS; AND TALKS ON TECHNICAL COOPERATION. CITING PRESIDENT CARTER'S PUBLIC REFERENCES TO A US WILLINGNESS TO HELP VIETNAM DRILL FOR OIL, HIEN ASKED FOR CLARIFICATION OF US INTENTIONS REGARDING OIL EXPLORATION AND EXPLOITATION. HE NOTED THAT THE SRV IS CURRENTLY WORKING WITH MANY OTHER WESTERN COMPANIES ON THIS PROBLEM AND REQUESTED CONCRETE INFORMATION ON POSSIBLE US PARTICIPATION IN SUCH VENTURES.

3. TURNING TO FOREIGN POLICY, HIEN NOTED SRVS INTENTION TO WIDEN NORMAL RELATIONS INCLUDING COUNTRIES HAVING
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 PARIS 13027 01 OF 04 040940Z

DIFFERENT SOCIAL SYSTEMS. SINGLING OUT SOUTHEAST ASIA IN PARTICULAR, HE NOTED THAT VIETNAM HAS NORMAL RELATIONS WITH ALMOST ALL COUNTRIES IN THE REGION AND THAT THIS IS MAINLY DUE TO THEIR "CORRECT" FOUR POINT FOREIGN POLICY. PHAN HIEN NOTED HOLBROOKE'S RECENT TRIP TO REGION WITH CODEL WOLFF AND OBSERVED THAT SUCH A JOINT TRIP WAS "DANGEROUS" TO HOLBROOKE DUE TO

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PAGE 01 PARIS 13027 02 OF 04 040949Z
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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 04 PARIS 13027

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SOME OF WOLFF'S STATEMENTS (AN OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO WOLFF'S CLAIM THAT THE SRV IS EXPORTING CAPTURED AMERICAN WEAPONS TO INSURGENTS IN THAILAND AND MALAYSIA). HIEN NOTED THAT IT IS ONLY BECAUSE OF HIS FRIENDSHIP FOR HOLBROOK THAT HE DID NOT SHARPLY CRITICIZE THESE STATEMENTS. HE OBSERVED FURTHER THE GOOD STATE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN VIETNAM AND WESTERN EUROPEAN AND SCANDANAVIAN COUNTRIES AND FRANCE AND SWEDEN IN PARTICULAR, MAKING SPECIAL NOTE OF FRANCE'S RECENT LARGE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION AND OTHER SMALL ONES SUCH AS THE NETHERLANDS. HE THEN RHETORICALLY ASKED SHOULD NOT A LARGE, RICH COUNTRY SUCH AS THE US DO FOR VIETNAM WHAT FRENCH RECENTLY DID, NOTING PARENTHETICALLY THAT FRANCE AND VIETNAM HAVE FINALLY COME "BACK TOGETHER" AFTER MANY YEARS AS ADVERSARIES.

4. CLEARLY ALLUDING TO THE NEED FOR A US AID CONTRIBUTION, HIEN OBSERVED THAT A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF THESE TALKS WOULD CREATE FURTHER FAVORABLE ACTION BY THE SRV IN SEEKING INFORMATION ON MIAS. IN PARTICULAR SUCH AN AID CONTRIBUTION WOULD HAVE A MAJOR PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT ON THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE WHO HIEN CONTENTED ARE NOW RELUCTANT TO SEARCH FOR MIAS WHEN THEY KNOW THAT THE US HAS NOT MADE SUCH A CONTRIBUTION. HIEN CONCLUDED OPENING REMARKS BY ASKING WHETHER WE ARE
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SECRET

PAGE 02 PARIS 13027 02 OF 04 040949Z

PREPARED TO SIGN A DOCUMENT COVERING ALL OF THE AGREEMENTS WE WOULD REACH IN PARIS.

5. HOLBROOKE RESPONDED BY READING HIS PREPARED SECOND STATEMENT WHICH BEGAN BY OUTLINING PRESENT US POLICY IN ALL OF ASIA. HE STRESSED THAT WE WILL MAINTAIN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR FRIENDS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND WOULD TAKE NO ACTIONS TO ENDANGER THE PEACE WHICH CURRENTLY EXISTS. HOLBROOKE ALSO ALLUDED TO SECRETARY

VANCE'S SPEECH IN GEORGIA WHICH STATED THAT "THE ADVANCEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS A CENTRAL PART OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY." HE ALSO TWICE ALLUDED TO PROBLEM OF FAMILIES DIVIDED BY EVENTS OF THE PAST YEARS AND OUR HOPE THAT THEY MAY SOON BE REUNITED. STRESSING AGAIN OUR WILLINGNESS TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS, HOLBROOKE INDICATED OUR READINESS TO REMOVE OBSTACLES IN THIS PROCESS. HE THEN STATED THAT THE US IS PREPARED TO REMOVE ITS OBJECTION TO SRV MEMBERSHIP IN THE UN AND WOULD WELCOME ITS APPLICATION WHENEVER HANOI CHOOSES TO REAPPLY. HE FURTHER INDICATED THAT WE ARE PREPARED TO REMOVE OUR PRESENT TRADE EMBARGO AS SOON AS EMBASSIES HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED IN THE RESPECTIVE CAPITALS.

6. HOLBROOKE ALSO USED THIS OPPORTUNITY TO RESPOND TO HIEN'S CONCERN REGARDING REPRESENTATIVE WOLFF'S STATEMENTS. POSITING THE NEED FOR IMPROVED EXECUTIVE-LEGISLATIVE RELATIONS, HOLBROOKE EXPLAINED THAT HIS TRIP WITH WOLFF WAS UNDERTAKEN FOR THIS PURPOSE, ALTHOUGH IT INVOLVED SEPARATE MEETINGS WITH ASIAN LEADERS AND SEPARATE STATEMENTS ON PROBLEMS.

7. TURNING TO CAPTURED ARMS HOLBROOKE STATED THAT WE REMAINED CONCERNED ABOUT THEM, THAT WE ARE AWARE OF SRV SUPPORT FOR ELEMENTS IN THAILAND OPPOSED TO THE GOVERNMENT BUT THAT WE HAVE SEEN NO EVIDENCE THAT
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SECRET

PAGE 03 PARIS 13027 02 OF 04 040949Z

MILITARY EQUIPMENT CAPTURED IN VIETNAM HAS BEEN SHIPPED TO THAILAND OR MALAYSIA.

8. FOLLOWING THIS, HOLBROOKE NOTED HIEN'S REFERENCE TO THE SRV'S RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT WITH THE FRENCH BY STRESSING THAT US-VIETNAMESE RECONCILIATION WOULD HOPEFULLY COME ABOUT MORE RAPIDLY THAN THE FRENCH EXPERIENCE. AT THIS POINT HIEN SUGGESTED BREAK.

9. DURING BREAK HIEN SAID "IMAGINATIVE WAY" MUST BE FOUND TO SOLVE AID PROBLEM. HOLBROOKE POINTED OUT THERE WERE UNQUESTIONABLE LIMITS TO WHAT COULD BE DONE WITHOUT CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT. HOLBROOKE RAISED PROBLEM OF THREE KOREAN DIPLOMATS STILL IMPRISONED IN SAIGON, TO WHICH HIEN MADE NO RESPONSE. ON QUESTION OF THAILAND, HIEN SAID VIETNAMESE WERE NOT INVOLVED THERE BUT US SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THAT THERE ARE 20 MILLION (SIC) ETHNIC LAO IN THAILAND WHO HAVE RIGHT TO STRUGGLE FOR THEIR FREEDOM. QUESTION OF TUCKER GOUGELMANN'S FAMILY BEING PERMITTED TO LEAVE SAIGON WAS BROUGHT UP TO HIEN, WHO MADE NO RESPONSE. DURING DISCUSSION OF

SITUATION IN SOUTH, HIEN NOTED FORMER US EMBASSY IN
SAIGON NOW BEING USED AS YOUTH CENTER.

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PAGE 01 PARIS 13027 03 OF 04 040941Z
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S E C R E T SECTION 03 OF 04 PARIS 13027

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10. FOLLOWING THE BREAK HOLBROOKE SPOKE FIRST AND
COMMENTED ON HIEN'S REFERENCES TO POSSIBLE US AID
NOTING THAT THIS IS A SUBJECT THAT CREATES STRONG EMO-
TION AMONG AMERICANS. HOLBROOKE STRESSED A WIDESPREAD
AND CONGRESSIONAL OPPOSITION TO AID WHICH IS REFLECTED
IN CURRENT LEGISLATION.

11. HOLBROOKE THEN NOTED THAT SOME OF VIETNAM'S NEEDS
ARE ALREADY BEING MET BY PRIVATE HUMANITARIAN
ASSISTANCE FROM US ORGANIZATIONS AS WELL AS BY PROGRAMS
OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO WHICH US IS THE MAJOR
CONTRIBUTOR. HOLBROOKE ADDED PARENTHETICALLY THAT SINCE
JANUARY 20TH THE US INTERPOSED NO OBJECTION TO ANY
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING AID TO VIETNAM
AND NOTED THAT THIS WAS DONE AT THE PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL
DIRECTION. HOLBROOKE THEN STATED THAT AS RELATIONS
BETWEEN US DEVELOP, THERE IS ALWAYS THE POSSIBILITY THAT
CHANGING ATTITUDES WILL LEAD TO CHANGES IN PRESENT
LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY RESTRICTIONS SO AS TO PERMIT
MODEST AMOUNTS OF OTHER TYPES OF ASSISTANCE IN
KEEPING WITH THE LONG STANDING HUMANITARIAN TRADITION
OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

12. HOLBROOKE DEFERRED A RESPONSE ON HIEN'S
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SECRET

PAGE 02 PARIS 13027 03 OF 04 040941Z

QUESTION ON OIL EXPLORATION. REITERATING OUR PROPOSAL TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS, HOLBROOKE INDICATED WE WISHED TO OPEN EMBASSIES AND EXCHANGE AMBASSADORS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. HE REAFFIRMED OUR DECISION TO NO LONGER VETO VIETNAMESE ADMISSION TO THE UN AND RESTATED OUR WILLINGNESS TO LIFT OUR TRADE EMBARGO ONCE EMBASSIES HAD BEEN OPENED.

13. HIEN BEGAN HIS RESPONSE TO HOLBROOKE'S STATEMENTS BY THANKING HIM FOR ANSWERING MOST OF THE QUESTIONS HE HAD POSED AT THE OUTSET. HE TOOK NOTE OF THE US DECISION REGARDING UN MEMBERSHIP, BUT ASKED WHY WE DID NOT REMOVE OUR TRADE EMBARGO AT THE SAME TIME, NOTING THAT BOTH WERE PART OF THE "ERRONEOUS" POLICIES OF THE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION. HE INDICATED THAT PUBLIC OPINION WILL CONSIDER THE NEW ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY NO DIFFERENT THAN THE OLD IF THE EMBARGO IS NOT REMOVED. TURNING TO MIA'S, HE NOTED THAT THE MECHANISM ESTABLISHED BY THE WOODCOCK COMMISSION IS WORKING AND STATED THAT THE SRV WILL INTENSIFY ITS EFFORTS MUCH MORE TO RESOLVE THIS PROBLEM. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT THIS QUESTION IS RELATED TO US CONTRIBUTION TO HEALING THE WOUNDS OF WAR, NOT FOR BARGAINING PURPOSES BUT BECAUSE OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT ON THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE. HIEN THEN RELATED ESTABLISHING EMBASSIES TO THE AID QUESTION OBSERVING THAT THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE WOULD NOT "UNDERSTAND" IF THE US EMBASSY IS ESTABLISHED IN HANOI PRIOR TO A US CONTRIBUTION TO HEALING THE WOUNDS OF WAR.

14. INDICATING THE SRV IS PREPARED TO DO BUSINESS WITH THE US, HIEN SAID OPENLY THAT THE VIETNAMESE CAN DO WITHOUT THE US SINCE IT HAS MANY OTHER FRIENDS. ACCORDING TO THE FRENCH SAYING, THOSE WHO ARE ABSENT ARE ALWAYS WRONG, IMPLYING IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR THE US NOT TO ARRIVE TOO LATE.

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PAGE 03 PARIS 13027 03 OF 04 040941Z

15. HIEN SAID THE US HAD PROPOSED NORMALIZING

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PAGE 01 PARIS 13027 04 OF 04 040944Z
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S E C R E T SECTION 04 OF 04 PARIS 13027

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RELATIONS AND ESTABLISHING EMBASSIES, WITH DISCUSSION OF THE US CONTRIBUTION TO HEALING THE WOUNDS OF WAR BEING LOOKED AT LATER. HE ASKED WHETHER HOLBROOKE THOUGHT THIS WOULD BE REALLY A POSSIBILITY. HE ASKED WHAT HOLBROOKE COULD CONCEIVE OF AS A POSSIBLE WAY OF AVOIDING THE OBSTACLES. HIEN SAID THE SRV WOULD NOT WISH TO CREATE POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES FOR THE US, BUT THE SRV ALSO HAD ITS DIFFICULTIES AND EXPECTED THE US NOT TO MAKE DIFFICULTIES FOR HIS OWN COUNTRY.

16. HIEN SAID WE AGREE THAT OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO PROCEED TO NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS AND TO HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH EACH OTHER BUT WE MUST FIND A FORMULA, AND A FORMULA WHICH COULD SATISFY BOTH SIDES. THIS WOULD HAVE TO INCLUDE FOR THE VIETNAMESE SIDE SOME US RESPONSE CONCERNING THE "CONTRIBUTION". HE EXPRESSED SOME CONFIDENCE THAT THE TWO SIDES SHOULD BE ABLE TO WORK TOGETHER TO FIND A SOLUTION.

17. HIEN SUGGESTED THAT WHAT WE AGREED UPON, WE COULD MAKE PUBLIC BUT THAT SOME AGREEMENTS NEED NOT BE MADE PUBLIC. ON SOME MATTERS WE COULD WAIT UNTIL THE MATTER WAS COMPLETELY RESOLVED AND THEN MAKE IT PUBLIC.

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PAGE 02 PARIS 13027 04 OF 04 040944Z

18. HOLBROOKE SAID THAT HE WOULD REPORT IN DETAIL HIEN'S VIEWS BUT WOULD LIKE TO MAKE ONE LAST COMMENT.

AS FOR PUBLIC VERSUS SECRET AGREEMENTS, THE US WOULD HAVE TO CONSULT THE CONGRESS. THE FACT THAT IN THE PAST THE VIETNAMESE HAD DEALT WITH AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS WHICH DID NOT DO SO IS NOW IRRELEVANT. THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION INTENDS TO BE OPEN AND FRANK AND HAVE CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE CONGRESS; THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO HAVE ITS SUPPORT. HE AGREED THAT IT WAS THE TASK OF THESE TWO DELEGATIONS, AS DIPLOMATS, TO FIND IMAGINATIVE WAYS TO ATTAIN OUR MUTUAL OBJECTIVES.

19. THE TWO SIDES DISCUSSED PRESS ARRANGEMENTS DESCRIBED IN REF B AND AGREED TO MEET MAY 4 AT THE SAME TIME AND SAME PLACE.

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